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 FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6591
 INFO RUTABA/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE 1466
 RUEHMH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE 9224
 RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE 1862
 BT

~~SECRET~~ CAIRO 05521

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
 TAGS: PREL, SU, ET, EG
 SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN MEDIATION BETWEEN SUDAN AND ETHIOPIA

REF: STATE 049798

1. (~~SECRET~~ ENTIRE TEXT.)

2. FOLLOWING BOUTROS GHALI'S FEBRUARY 18 MEETING WITH CODEL FOWLER (SEPTTEL), CHARGE ASKED FOR AN ASSESSMENT OF HOW THE EGYPTIAN INITIATIVE WITH SUDAN AND ETHIOPIA WAS DEVELOPING. CHARGE NOTED THAT FOLLOWING BOUTROS' STOP IN KHARTOUM THE GOS HAD ACCUSED ETHIOPIA OF PROMOTING TROUBLE IN THE SOUTH.

3. BOUTROS REPLIED THAT HE WAS OPTIMISTIC AND BELIEVED THAT QUIET TALKS BETWEEN SUDANESE AND EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTERS WOULD PROCEED DESPITE PUBLIC CHARGES AND COUNTER-CHARGES. FOREIGN MINISTER KAMAL HASSAN ALI, HE SAID, WAS PROCEEDING TO KHARTOUM ON FEBRUARY 19 TO PROMOTE SUDANESE PARTICIPATION IN THE TALKS. (VISIT IS BEING DESCRIBED IN THE PRESS AS A GOE REPORT TO NIMEIRI ON MUBARAK'S TRIP TO THE U.S.). BOUTROS SAID HE WOULD FOLLOW UP WHEN HE VISITED KHARTOUM ON FEBRUARY 25, EN ROUTE TO THE OAU MEETING IN ADDIS ABABA.

4. ASKED ABOUT CONDITIONS IN THE SUDAN, BOUTROS WAS MORE PESSIMISTIC THAN WE HAVE SEEN HIM RECENTLY. HE SAID NIMEIRI WAS SICK, HIS ADVISORS WERE WORTHLESS AND SOUTHERN DISSIDENTS WERE PRESSING FOR A CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP, NOT SECESSION. HE GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT EGYPT DID NOT KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH A SERIOUS SITUATION THAT WAS SO IMPORTANT TO ITS INTERESTS.

5. IN SEPARATE MEETING WITH CODEL FOWLER, PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR OSAMA EL-BAZ WAS LESS DOWN-BEAT THAN BOUTROS (POSSIBLY BECAUSE OF THE SEMI-PUBLIC NATURE OF THE GATHERING). OSAMA DID SAY, HOWEVER, THAT THE SUDAN BOUNDARY WAS EGYPT'S SECURITY PERIMETER AND EGYPT

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WOULD, IF NECESSARY, SEND TROOPS TO PROTECT THE GOS
FROM ATTACK BY ETHIOPIA OR LIBYA. (COMMENT: WE
SUSPECT THAT MUBARAK, IN EVENT OF SUCH AN ATTACK
WOULD BE VERY CAUTIOUS BEFORE COMMITTING TROOPS.)
PRECHTTT

6. MFA INFORMATION (INR) DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR SALAH
BASSIOUNI, IN A FEBRUARY 20 CONVERSATION WITH POL
COUNSELOR, ECHOED GHALI'S PESSIMISM OVER CONDITIONS
IN THE SUDAN. EGYPTIAN AND SUDANESE INTELLIGENCE,
HE SAID, PERSISTS IN ASSESSING THE SOUTH SUDAN
SITUATION AS BEING "UNDER CONTROL" AND REPORTING
THERE IS "NO NEED TO WORRY." NIMEIRI REPORTEDLY
TOOK THIS FAMILIAR LINE IN HIS TALKS WITH FORMER
KAMAL HASSAN ALI DURING THE LATTER'S VISIT TO
KHARTOUM ON FEBRUARY 19. NEVERTHELESS, BASSIOUNI
ADDED, "I AM WORRIED." ON THE QUESTION OF MEDIATION
BETWEEN THE SUDAN AND ETHIOPIA, BASSIOUNI NOTED THAT
THE FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE
BEEN HELD TWO WEEKS FOLLOWING BOUTROS GHALI'S MOST
RECENT VISITS TO ADDIS AND KHARTOUM, BUT IT NOW LOOKS
AS IF THIS SCHEDULE WILL NOT BE ADHERED TO. (KAMAL
HASSAN ALI APPARENTLY BROUGHT BACK NO NEWS ON THIS
SUBJECT FROM HIS TALKS YESTERDAY WITH NIMEIRI.) THE
EGYPTIANS, BASSIOUNI ADDED, ARE CURRENTLY CONSIDERING
THE IDEA OF BEING PRESENT AT SUCH A MINISTERIAL
MEETING, BUT THEY MUST BE CAREFUL TO AVOID CONVEYING
TO NIMEIRI THE IMPRESSION THAT CAIRO IS "GANGING UP
AGAINST HIM" WITH THE ETHIOPIANS.
PRECHT
END OF MESSAGE

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